

disease to avoid delay and to seek treatment before it is too late for more than palliative measures. Dr. Fraser reports that from statements made to him by local men the publication of circulars and newspaper articles by the Health Department has been instrumental in inducing a number of persons suffering from early operable cancer to secure treatment, the result of which it is hoped will be permanent.

When the educational measures were put in force two years ago, the cancer death rate of the city had for a long period been increasing. Twenty years ago the average death rate from cancer in Portsmouth was 6.79 per 10,000 of the population, but in 1913 it had risen to 9.16 per 10,000. In that year the total number of deaths was only 34 less than were caused by tuberculosis. While admitting that the increase in the recorded cancer death rate might have been caused in part by improved methods of diagnosis, the Health Committee of the Portsmouth Town Council nevertheless believed that the present number of deaths was unnecessarily large, and they felt it incumbent to adopt whatever measures might lessen the ravages of the disease. The initiative came from Dr. Charles P. Childe, senior surgeon of the Royal Portsmouth Hospital and a member of the Health Committee of the Town Council. As early as 1906 Dr. Childe in his book, "The Control of the Scourge," had given to the public the benefit of his extended experience with cancer. At his suggestion the Portsmouth authorities in 1913 began a campaign of public education under the official auspices of the Health Department. The methods adopted included the monthly publication in the local newspapers of articles regarding cancer and the printing and distribution of a Health Department circular on the subject. Arrangements were made for periodical lectures to midwives, nurses, and to those engaged in social work in Portsmouth. The Health Department further made provision for free microscopical examinations and reports on suspected cancerous growths in order to assist physicians in immediate diagnosis in the case of patients who were unable to pay for such laboratory service. The experience of the Portsmouth authorities had been that by far the majority of patients who presented themselves at hospitals suffering from cancer exhibited the disease in a stage too advanced to be cured. It was held that the reason for this delay in seeking advice was not as a rule because patients feared operation, but because they were ignorant that they were suffering from anything serious until they began to suffer pain. The fact that cancer at its onset is almost always painless should be widely realized in order that the public may learn the importance of other symptoms which will enable them to recognize the disease in the early stages when it can nearly always be successfully removed by competent surgery.

#### MEASLES AND WHOOPING-COUGH GREAT FOES OF CHILDREN.

With the opening of the public schools come reports to the California State Board of Health of cases of whooping-cough, measles, scarlet fever and diphtheria. Most people regard scarlet fever and diphtheria with a certain degree of alarm, but measles and whooping-cough are generally regarded as necessities; or at least, as being of minor importance.

Most fatal cases of these diseases occur in children under five years of age, and parents who deliberately expose their children to cases of measles and whooping-cough, in order that they may "catch them and have them over with," are taking a very great risk. During the first five years of a child's life special care should be taken

to protect him from such exposures. By deferring these diseases to later childhood, the death rate may be greatly lowered.

The chief difficulty in the control of these diseases lies in the fact that they are more "catching" in the early stages, than later. For this reason, any cough or cold in a child just entering school should be regarded with more or less suspicion, the case should be closely watched, and the child isolated, so that if it proves to be measles or whooping-cough, contact with other children may be prevented.

During 1914, there were 8,852 cases of measles reported to the California State Board of Health, with 150 deaths; and during the same year, 2,595 cases of whooping-cough were reported, with 305 deaths. The tragedy does not lie in deaths alone, however, for the complications that often follow are what give these diseases their deadly character. Some health authorities say that tuberculosis follows measles and whooping-cough more often than any other of the communicable diseases. However this may be, the wise parent exercises every precaution to protect the child from these diseases, until as late a period in childhood as may be possible.

The control of these diseases is largely in the hands of parents. Every case should be isolated as soon as recognized and report made to the local health officer.

To admit knowingly, a child suffering from either of these diseases, to the schools or picture shows or to any public gathering, is a direct offense against all public health regulations.

#### RURAL CREDITS.

At the Rural Credits Conference held on the Panama-Pacific International Exposition grounds September 21, it was decided to form a state organization to work for the adoption of Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 17, authorizing legislation in regard to rural credits and to co-operate with the State Commission recently appointed and with other agencies, to secure for California an adequate system of rural credits adapted to our conditions.

Frank H. Gould of San Francisco was named as chairman of the temporary organization, and A. L. Cowell, secretary of the San Joaquin Valley Water Problem Association, was selected as secretary. Headquarters have been established at Room 264 Mills Building, and an active campaign in behalf of the proposed constitutional amendment is being prosecuted pending completion of the permanent organization. Letters from persons interested in rural credits with suggestions as to methods of procedure are solicited by the committee.

The amendment will be voted on at the special state election to be held October 26.

The movement for a system of rural credits in California is in line with the general sentiment of the nation that measures should be taken to give to the farmers as favorable opportunities for financing their operations as are now open to the business men of the cities. The high rate of interest charged farmers retards rural development, besides adding an unnecessary burden to the already over-capitalized agriculture of the country, a burden which is passed along to all consumers of food products in the shape of higher prices. Therefore any plan that would remove some of the restrictions which now hamper the farmers of California should be of benefit to all the people of the state.

The defects of the present credit system emphasize further the fact that the need is not merely to provide cheaper money for agricultural